



Solastalgia: The distress caused by environmental change

Author(s): Albrecht G, Sartore GM, Connor L, Higginbotham N, Freeman S, Kelly B, Stain H, Tonna A, Pollard G
Year: 2007
Journal: Australasian Psychiatry : Bulletin of Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists. 15 (S1): 95-98

Abstract:

OBJECTIVE: Solastalgia is a new concept developed to give greater meaning and clarity to environmentally induced distress. As opposed to nostalgia--the melancholia or homesickness experienced by individuals when separated from a loved home--solastalgia is the distress that is produced by environmental change impacting on people while they are directly connected to their home environment. The paper will focus on two contexts where collaborative research teams have found solastalgia to be evident: the experiences of persistent drought in rural NSW and the impact of large-scale open-cut coal mining on individuals in the Upper Hunter Valley of NSW. In both cases, people exposed to environmental change experienced negative affect that is exacerbated by a sense of powerlessness or lack of control over the unfolding change process. **METHODS:** Qualitative (interviews and focus groups) and quantitative (community-based surveys) research has been conducted on the lived experience of drought and mining, and the findings relevant to solastalgia are presented. **RESULTS:** The authors are exploring the potential uses and applications of the concept of solastalgia for understanding the psychological impact of the increasing incidence of environmental change worldwide. **CONCLUSIONS:** Worldwide, there is an increase in ecosystem distress syndromes matched by a corresponding increase in human distress syndromes. The specific role played by global-scale environmental challenges to 'sense of place' and identity will be explored in the future development of the concept of solastalgia.

Source: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10398560701701288>

Resource Description

Exposure :

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Ecosystem Changes, Extreme Weather Event

Extreme Weather Event: Drought

Geographic Feature:

resource focuses on specific type of geography

None or Unspecified

Geographic Location:

Climate Change and Human Health Literature Portal



resource focuses on specific location

Non-United States

Non-United States: Australasia

Health Impact: 

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Mental Health/Stress

Mental Health Effect/Stress: Mood Disorder

Medical Community Engagement: 

resource focus on how the medical community discusses or acts to address health impacts of climate change

A focus of content

Mitigation/Adaptation: 

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation

Resource Type: 

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article

Timescale: 

time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified